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HUMAN AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF URBANIZATION IN ASIA: SOME SOCIO-CULTURAL EFFECTS OF URBANIZATION IN DJAKARTA[1/]

Contents

		Page
1.	Introduction	2
2.	Historical growth of present population structure	3
3.	Traditional beliefs and practices	4
4.	Social cohesion and self-help	8
5.	Self-government and institutional organizations	9
6.	Conclusions	12

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1. Introduction

The contents of the following paper have been restricted to those points mentioned in the Agenda, Part I, Item 3, sub a; that is to say to the causes and effects of urbanization in Djakarta on traditional beliefs and practices, social cohesion, self-help, self-government and institutional organizations. These items were only supervisionally touched upon in the report on the Urbanization of Djakarta, as prepared for Unesco by the Institute of Social and Economic Research of the Faculty of Economics of the University of Indonesia (hereafter to be cited as "main report"). The questionnaire used for this report did not include questions as to cultural phenomena. Hence the present paper, though to be estimated against the background of the main report, is not based on research and thus necessarily of a somewhat impressionistic nature. It has been tried, however, by using what printed sources were available, to give the report a basis in actual facts. The paper has furthermore been written with a view on readers not personally acquainted with the situation in Indonesia. Therefore, those familiar with this country and its capital might find much that is self-evident to them.

One of the weak points of the Djakarta report has furthermore been its occupation with the migrants proper, while it has not tried to compare the social and cultural position of the migrants with that of the autochtonous population. The present paper will present a few remarks on this point.

Another point should be stressed. It is the conviction of the present writer that next to nothing can be discovered about the causes of migration by relying solely on the replies of people interviewed in the city. Questions as to the motives of migration are practically without value. In order to ascertain whether social, economic or cultural causes have been predominant in effecting migration, research into the areas of origin of the migrants will be necessary. The Djakarta study has therefore concentrated on the effects of urbanization rather than its causes.

/In order to

In order to understand the relationship between autochtonous population and immigrants, a short review of its historical development will be necessary.

2. Historical growth of present population structure

For an Asian city, Djakarta is relatively young. But although the town is but a few centuries of age, it has of old formed a foreign enclave amidst the rural Sundanese population. Foreign, because not only Europeans and Chinese lived within its walls, but also because the Dutch East India Company brought in a great number of slaves from other Indonesian islands or from abroad. In the course of time, these people of different ethnic origin tended to cluster together in separate kampungs (wards), still designated as Kampung Bali, Kampung Makassar, etc. This tendency still consists until the present day, as is proved by Table 15 of our main Report. Of old, the segregation of the European, Chinese and Indonesian population groups into different districts, has resulted in a strong social cohesion and homogeneity, reinforced by the fact that in the colonial social structure the three groups were also economically homogeneous. Gradually, those who were drawn into the city's orbit began to look upon themselves as distinct from their compatriots. Thus the population of the capital received a separate name, being called "Kampung Betawi", after the old Dutch name for the city, Batavia. They came to speak a language of their own as well, the so-called "Batavia Malay", consisting of Malay with Sundanese and Chinese words.

Typical for the pre-war situation was the ease with which new immigrants were absorbed. People whose parents had moved into the city and who thus belonged to the second generation already tended to consider themselves native Djakartanese. Of course, this was made easy by the relatively small number of immigrants: about 10,000 a year in the period 1920-1930 as against about 100,000 yearly after 1950!

As is proved by Table 6 of our main Report, the year 1950 was to constitute the great turning point in the composition of the population. In that year the broad stream of immigrants began to flow into the city, many of them originating in Central Java. This was partly caused by the transfer of the capital of the Republic from Djokjakarta back to Djakarta early that year.

/In order

In order to form a picture of the socio-cultural situation in Djakarta, the difference (and sometimes the tension) between the Kaum Betawi and the new immigrants should constantly be kept in mind. Quantitatively, the Kaum Betawi, are outnumbered about three to one by the newcomers (Table 3 of main Report). The newcomers in themselves, however, from a very heterogeneous group. They comprise lower class Sundanese day-labourers as well as Javanese civil servants and Minangkabau traders.

From a recent unpublished report by the Department of Mass Education of the Ministry of Education[1/] we are able to present some new figures on the ethnic origin of the inhabitants of three Djakarta kampungs. These kampungs were situated respectively in the centre of the city, on the rural-urban border and in the completely rural surroundings. It was found out that the number of Kaum Betawi increased when going from the centre to the rural area: resp. 31, 71 and 98 per cent of the people considering themselves native Djakartanese. Of course, this tallies with the number of immigrants in these wards, who comprised respectively 50, 28 and 0.1 per cent of the inhabitants. This means that kampungs with a predominantly Kaum Betawi population gradually increase when going from the centre to the outskirts.

In the last five years, moreover, the gradual disappearance of the European Indo-European groups has opened up the Western quarters of the cities to Indonesians. It has mostly been the group of government servants, many of them Javanese, which has moved into these areas. Thus, they were the first to live outside the kampung-atmosphere and its social control. Western urban characteristics are consequently most developed in this group.

3. Traditional beliefs and practices

There exists a well-established tradition in sociological handbooks as well as in literature as to the detrimental effects of urbanization. It is stated that the city population shows either deculturisation, detribalization, disorganization, or anomie; that they are uprooted, wretched creatures leading a kind of animal existence until the doom of Mumford's Necropolis will devour them all. In particular Van der Kroef has applied

/these views to

1/ Laporan Panitia Penjelidikan dasar 2 Pendidikan Masjarakat (Report of the Research Committee on the Foundations of Mass Education, Djakarta) mimeographed, 1955, Table 2.

these views to Djakarta in his study of the Indonesian city[1]. He gives a depressing picture of life in Indonesian towns, citing such phenomena as corruption, political intrigue and extremism, crime and the like as instances of the decline.

Even Wertheim, whose views of city life in Indonesia are usually much more balanced and reasonable than those of Van der Kroef, sometimes seems to adhere to this idea. He states, for instance, that "Education, with its individualizing effects (has) accentuated the sense of isolation in the modern towns. Urban life (has) exercized (an) individualizing and uprooting influence on.... the Chinese and Indonesian middle class business men and on the various groups of workers".[2]

The present writer would question the validity of these views. First of all, they would not seem to be confined to the Indonesian city only, but appear as well in the countryside. Secondly, it must be doubted whether concepts like these, developed by certain pessimistic Western philosophers, may without change be applied to Asiatic cities. In particular, one phenomenon of the Indonesian city should be stressed, i.e. the persistence of rural culture traits.

In the urban kampungs people continue to live in the same style and much the same cultural milieu as in the countryside. In other words, there exists no controversy between city and country as in the West. Even ecologically there is a gradual transition between the two. The very isolation of most of the city kampungs, hidden behind trees and bushes and in the river bends, has tended to accentuate the cohesion and preserved the customs of its inhabitants. Of course, these characteristics may be most clearly observed among those groups whose occupation tends to isolate them from Western urban influence. More exposed to this influence will be the intellectual and semi-intellectual civil servants and the labourers, who both pass part of their day outside the atmosphere of the kampung. The phenomena itself was observed by Van der Kroef, whose views, so different here from those noted above, are worth quoting in full:

/"The cultural

1/ J.M. van der Kroef: The City; its Culture and Evolution, in: Indonesia in the Modern World, Vol. I, Bandung 1954, p. 133 ev.
2/ W.F. Wertheim: Effects of Western Civilization on Indonesian Society, New York, 1950, p. 42.

"The cultural levelling process so characteristic of urbanism is impeded in the Indonesian cities by the persistence of rural culture traits among the inhabitants.... Rural survivals may include tradition, folkways, kinds of food, dress, housing and living arrangements, arts and music. In the Indonesian city immigrant villagers often display a marked liking for living together in an urban kampung according to original residence or area, they persist in wearing distinctive clothing peculiar to their folk culture, enjoy more or less unique forms of recreation, especially in connection with card games and gambling which vary according to the region, and so on. One consequence is that the newly arrived immigrant(s) may tend to remain "autonomous" for quite some time, adopting those traits of urban living only which are deemed indispensable, but otherwise remaining aloof".1/

We are a long way here from the same author's pessimism as noted earlier. It would seem that "autonomy" is nothing else than the cultural diversity so typical for Indonesia as a whole, which tends to reflect itself in the city as well. This diversity effectively retards the acceptance of urban culture traits. This certainly holds good with regard to religion.

There are no indications that religious life in the cities has declined. Of course, intensity of religious belief is difficult to estimate everywhere, but especially in a religion like Islam which demands few observable collective activities of its adherents. Official life is regulated with due regard to its observances. For instance, working hours in no way do interfere with religious duties, with offices and factories closing at 11 o'clock on Fridays to enable people to attend the mosque prayer. This was noted too by Logemann with regard to the port of Surabaya:...." the Javanese People.... can continue living in town in all essentials according to to standards of religion and custom they were born into".2/ The well-known Indonesian novelist: Takdir Alisjahbana, speaking about the village of Pasar Minggu close to the capital, states "It is astonishing how conservative and orthodox Islam is professed so close to Djakarta".3/ However, as social control in the kampungs is more rigid than in the Westernised quarters of the city, religious life will tend to be more lax in the latter.

/As to

1/ van der Kroef, op.cit. p. 171

2/ J.H.A. Logemann: "The characteristics of urban centres in the East.", in Eastern and Western World,

3/ S. Takdir Alisjahbana: "De botsing van Oost en West" (The conflict between East and West) in "Sticusa-Jaarboek" Amsterdam 1950, p. 52.

As to Protestantism, it would even seem that the different churches and sects flower more in the city than in the country. For the town of Macassar there is a study by Chabot[1], who has pointed out that the various ethnic groups living there successfully reinforce their internal cohesion by adhering to different churches or sects. Djakarta, the Batak church and missionary groups evacuated from China would seem to be particularly active, while Djokjakarta has an influential Catholic minority.

Among the traditional practices we may include customary feasts as well as the use of language. Among the former, circumcision and marriage are the most important. It has already been noted that rural traditions and folkways instead of disappearing are still largely adhered to. On the contrary, with the increase of wealth in the city feasts tend to assume potlatch like dimensions. "Conspicuous consumption" all too frequently occurs in order to increase one's status. This might be explained by the fact, that in a city status can only be proved by showing off one's monetary wealth, whereas in the country status is determined by descent and/or the size of landholdings. In general, Indonesian society shows a strongly developed status-consciousness, partly because it only recently emerged from feudalism. This tendency has been fast developed among the Kaum Betawi, who already know and acknowledge each other's status, most among the immigrants who yet have to acquire it. In addition, the Kaum Betawi even have a reputation among the other groups for the stinginess of their feasts. It is not impossible that the tendency to display wealth has enhanced graft and corruption among the immigrant group. Running into debt because of excessive feast-giving is not uncommon.

The development of a separate language among the Kaum Betawi, as already touched upon, has certainly been a remarkable phenomenon. The "Djakarta Malay" was a language easily picked up before the war by immigrant children, and was mostly used to address street-vendors, servants and the like. It was not used among the immigrants themselves, they either spoke the dialect of their area of orgin, or else, as far as they belonged to the upper class, Dutch. However, the grouping together of people of various areas

/in the city,

1/ H.Th. Chabot: Protestants-Christelijke groepen to Makassar. Indonesië, Vol.VII, 1954, p. 425-432.

in the city, created the need for a lingua franca, especially for the new middle class. Hence the development of a new general Indonesian language, the Bahasa Indonesia. The National Movement adopted it as its vehicle from the onset, and after the Revolution it became the national language. Schools and newspapers have carried it out all over the country, but to a large extent it still remains a city language. It is in the city that it is most extensively used and acquires its new words and expressions, while the Djakarta Malay has fallen into disuse. This forms a typical instance of a positive cultural contribution by the city, which proves that it can be a centre of cultural regeneration quite contrary to the pessimistic view as noted above.

The example might easily be extended to include other cultural expressions, for instance painting, literature and music. The new painters' schools are in particular to be found in Djokja and Bandung, while the literati lead their Bohemian life largely in Djakarta. But this would lead us far from our main subject.

4. Social cohesion and self-help

Social cohesion and social control have of old occupied an important place in Indonesian society, and the Djakartanese do not form an exception in this respect. The colonial government had little interest in kampung life and its inhabitants were largely left to themselves. This meant that they kept on to their old institutions and adat (customary law) whenever possible. For example, in 1938 Supomo investigated the adat with regard to inheritance in several Djakarta kampungs.[1/] It was found out that customary law here closely resembled that of Western and Central Java and was not influenced by either Islamic or Western ideas. This forms another instance of the resistive force of old traditions in a new environment.

Social control in the city kampung does not differ much from that in the rural ones. At first sight the greater number of inhabitants in the city kampungs would seem to provide difficulties, but these are effectively overcome by spilitting them up into several smaller ones. In fact, these subdivisions of

/kampungs,

1/ R. Supomo: Een onderzoek naar het adaterfrecht ter hoofd-plaats Batavia. (An investigation as to adat inheritance law in the capital Batavia) Indisch Tijdschrift van het Recht, Vol.150, 1939, p.105-124.

kampungs, designated by serial numbers, form the real social units. This is facilitated by the living together in one kampung of people of the same ethnic origin. Its inhabitants form a typical primary group, they know each other by sight and through local gossip have ample information as to each other's doings. Deviant behavior is not tolerated, and offenders are punished by ostracism or eventual banishment from the kampung. These matters are usually not brought to the police's notice. Still, old-fashioned forms of neighbour help (gotong-rojong, tolong-menolong) such as with the construction of a house, or in case of illness and accidents, birth and death, are on the decline, and certainly not to be found in kampongs consisting primarily of newcomers.

Yet it should not be supposed that the city-kampungs show a lack of co-operative spirit. It manifests itself, however, in more formal organizations for mutual aid, the most typical of which perhaps are the money-saving societies. In these, every member pays a small amount monthly, and receives his money back after a certain period (usually a year) or else in case of accidents. These societies may also work on a non-local basis, for example, among colleagues at the same office. Similar societies exist for other purposes. Probably these forms of organization are better suited to meet the needs for co-operation of the new immigrants. Their membership is usually limited to between fifty and hundred.

Larger organizations, particularly in the cultural fields, are almost always on an ethnic basis. Javanese, Bataks, Menadonese etc. still enjoy their own gamelan orchestra's, theatre groups or singing clubs exclusively among themselves. This cultural diversity may be enriching, but it certainly holds dangers of segregationalism. It would seem that only the political parties are able of organizing their members on a national level.

5. Self-government and institutional organizations

It seems appropriate to discuss here as well political life in the capital. This is of some interest, because the Kaum Betawi for some time before the last war (since 1923) possessed their own political party. Since 1927, it was represented in the Dutch-controlled People's Council by its able leader Mohd. Thamrin, who soon became one of the key figures in the

/Nationalist Movement. 1/

Nationalist Movement.[1] The party later merged into the concentration of nationalist parties, the National Fraction. After the Revolution, no attempt was made to reestablish this party, and no similar grouping took part in the first general elections of September 1955. This may perhaps be explained as a replacement of particularistic by nation-wide organizations. Still, the election figures show a remarkable difference between the capital and the rest of Java. Whereas the Indonesian Communist Party obtained 19.8 % of the votes on Java, in the capital only 11.3 % voted for it. With the Indonesian Socialist Party it was the other way around: in the capital it obtained 4.5 %, in the rest of Java only 1.3 % of the votes cast. Only a detailed study of the votes per kampong could show whether the Kaum Betawi or the immigrants have shown preference for one of these parties. But the figures stated above certainly do not point to a radicalisation of the political atmosphere in the capital. Thus, a very small part of them has voted for the left-wing parties.

Of greater significance is perhaps the structure and the functioning of the city-government in its contact with the kampung-population. Starting from the bottom upwards, we first meet a remarkable institution named Rukun Kampung. This is a neighbourhood-organization of which all the inhabitants of a kampung are members. In order to facilitate its work, the kampungs have been divided again into subdivisions, who each form a Rukun Tetangga (literally, neighbour unit). The organizations used to work on a voluntary basis, but membership is now obligatory. Their main function originally was to supervise the security in their areas, provide night watches, keep an eye on strangers and vagrants, and if necessary report their doings to higher authorities or the police. Prompt guarding against outbreaks of fire was included among its duties as well. At present, it fulfils a rather important function as intermediary

/between the

1/ See : J. Petrus Blumberger: "De nationalistische beweging in Ned.-Indie" (The nationalist movement in the Neth.-Indies), Haarlem 1931, p.41,297; J.M.Pluvier: "Overzicht van de ontwikkeling der Nationalistische Beweging in Indonesië" (Survey of the development of the Nationalist Movement in Indonesia), The Hague 1953,p.81; and also: "Verslag van de Commissie tot Bestudering van Staats-rechterlijke hervormingen" (Visman-Report), New York 1944,p.87.

between the formal city-government's lowest official, the lurah, and his subjects. The Rukun Kampung is particularly useful in transmitting new government regulations or orders to the people. By assembling all the heads of the Rukun Kampung in his jurisdiction, the lurah may easily give instructions to or receive information on his subjects. The heads of the Rukun Kampung then pass on the news by word of mouth to the Rukun Tetangga and so on to every household. Therefore, the establishment of Rukun Kampung and Rukun Tetangga is obligatory for all kampungs. They are completely democratic, and as membership usually is not larger than three to four hundred households, they are easy to organize. Heads are chosen annually, and are subject to constant control by the members. On the other hand, all other functionaries from the lurah upwards, are appointed from above, i.e. by the municipality. There are, however instances in which the head of Rukun Kampung becomes a far more influential figure in the kampung than the official lurah. In case of conflict between the two the lurah will be wise to accept the Rukun's point of view, lest he loses all contact with his subjects. This would inevitably lead to his transfer to another area sooner or later. The Rukun Kampung are perfectly aware of their power in this respect. Although these organizations may look somewhat anomalous in the present structure, where authority officially rests with the elected municipal council, it is improbable that they will disappear in the near future.

As to formal city administration, above the lurah (of which Djakarta counts 172) there are the tjamats (21) and next the wedanas (6). Legislative power rests with the elected municipal council, in which the political parties are represented. The executive (city-government council) is elected by and from among the members of the municipal council. At the top of the structure is the mayor, who is again appointed from above (the Ministry of the Interior).

However, the distance between the common people and the municipal government must be considered too great. This phenomenon was already observed by Logemann, who in his description of the Eastern city remarked: "To the urban masses of rural mentality, the activities of the municipality belong to another world, which they do not understand. Their representative may control the municipal authorities on their behalf, but they do not and cannot control /the representatives". 1/

the representatives"[1]. This holds true to Djakarta as well; contact between the council and the kampung population being insufficient. This was tragically demonstrated a short while ago in a conflict between the street vendors in one of the overcrowded market districts and the administration. The administration wanted to evict the vendors, because they were unsightly and interfered with traffic. The vendors on their part could not understand why they should not be free to perform any activity they liked in the streets. When at last the police demolished their stands they protested en masse in front of the city hall and sent delegations everywhere. Although the administration was probably in its right, public feeling ran high against it and the municipal council was obliged to vote a large sum for the rehabilitation of the vendors. The whole incident of course did not help to increase the popularity of the administration. Thus the "persistence of rural traits" in this respect may signify a certain inaccessibility to modern administrative methods. Up to now, chances for a better contact between the municipality and its subjects do not appear very great.

6. Conclusions

We are aware that the picture we have tried to paint of the socio-cultural effects of urbanization in Djakarta is not entirely free from bias. Partly as a consequence of the limitation of our subject matter as described in 1, only some social aspects of urbanization have been emphasized. Several serious problems have thus been excluded such as the housing shortage with its subsequent overcrowding; the shortage of fresh water; the traffic congestion; vagrancy; the crime wave, etc. Yet we do not believe that the picture has been greatly distorted, but this can only be confirmed by extensive new research. Still, emphasis on the positive aspects of urbanization was felt to be necessary in order to correct some current pessimistic views on the subject.

We have tried to show that there exists in Djakarta a typical persistence of rural traits in the city kampungs, which up to now has effectively prevented the deculturisation or disintegration of the immigrants. Here and there we found new forms of organization adapted to the urban environment. As there are signs that the greatest influx of immigrants is over, the city will probably embark upon a quieter future, in which it may try to build a better life for its inhabitants, both new and old.

1/ J.H.A. Logemann: op. cit. p. 102.